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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

* MAR 16 1931

U. S. Department of Agriculture
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Subject: "The Mailbag." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U. S. D. A.

It's all very well for me to try to be forehanded about the housework, to get some sewing done for spring and the winter blankets washed ready to pack away before the moths start making trouble. But see what happens when I get ambitious this way. My mail piles up and up. The result is that while my hands are deep in the washtub, my thoughts are on the letters waiting to be answered, and on my friends, far and near, whose problems need discussing.

So today I'll start by answering two good-sized questions before I even say a word about the menu. Yes, even before I hint that the apricot pudding we're planning is -- gracious, that menu almost slipped out ahead of time at that. After the questions I'll have several words to say about the pudding.

Someone out in Wisconsin wants to know how to remove the printing from flour sacks. Flour and sugar sacks often make very nice dish towels. They are also splendid for washing windows and for dust clothes. Naturally all that heavy black print must come off before they can be used. Sometimes this comes off very easily, sometimes it is very difficult indeed to remove. I suggest that you experiment with the towels you have on hand. If one method doesn't work, probably another will. Usually, however, a kerosene bath will make that print disappear very easily. Soak the bag in kerosene over night, then wash it out in several warm waters using plenty of soap; finally rinse thoroughly. The printing should then come out without a mark, or will after a few launderings at least. Sometimes the ink will fade out quite easily in the sun. Wet the bags, then spread them in the direct sunlight to bleach. Repeat this process several times, if necessary. If a third method is needed use some kind of bleach like Javelle water. Directions for using bleaches are to be found in your stain removal leaflet.

Question Number 2: "What is the best way to wash knit underwear?"

Manufacturers of knit underwear seem to be agreed that a thick suds made of lukewarm water and mild soap flakes is best for laundering. If the water is hard, 1/4 ounce of borax may be added to each gallon of water. If necessary rub soap on the badly soiled spots.

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Put the garment in the suds and squeeze the soapy water through several times, giving special attention to soiled spots. It is well to avoid rubbing as much as possible since rubbing tangles the wool fibres and causes shrinkage. Rinse twice in clean warm water, squeeze out excess water and hang the garments up to dry by the shoulders or the tops of bands. If garments must be dried indoors, dry woollens or worsteds at some distance from the stove or radiator because excess heat shrinks them. It is better not to hang up woollens, silks or rayons since they stretch and get out of shape. Rayon is weaker when wet. Probably I don't even need to remind you that knit underwear needs no ironing. That goes for silk, cotton and wool.

Orange juice seems to be causing trouble here and there. It gets on the table cloth and the baby's bibs and rompers, and then how in the world does one take out the stain? It will save time to rinse out the orange juice before it dries if you can. If not try soaking it in lukewarm water followed by washing in warm water. If the stain has been set, however, bleaching may be necessary. Of course, bleaches can only be used on white fabrics. Potassium permanganate is a particularly effective bleach. Dissolve one teaspoon of potassium permanganate crystals in a pint of water. Apply a few drops of this solution until the spot turns brown and follow it with clear water. Then apply weak oxalic acid solution to remove the brown stain. You may repeat this process as often as necessary until the stain has disappeared. Follow by washing the garment thoroughly in soap and water.

Here's a second reminder that next Monday, a week from today, we'll discuss St. Patrick's Day meals. At that time I will give you two menus, one for luncheon and one for dinner. Also I have several special recipes for the occasion. Emerald green will be featured, along with shamrocks and other tokens for this special day.

But that is next week. Just now, we must consider the family dinner for tonight. I've been trying to decide whether to give you the recipe for beef loaf or steamed apricot pudding. Both of them are such good recipes. But you will hardly want two whole recipes on one day, especially since directions for beef loaf are long. What's that? You really do want both recipes today? All right.

But the menu comes first. Beef loaf; creamed onions; string beans, buttered; pickles; tart red jelly; and, for dessert, steamed apricot pudding.

Let's start with the recipe for apricot pudding. Then if you aren't tired of writing, you can take down the beef loaf recipe.

In the apricot pudding, there are exactly 8 ingredients. I'll list them:

1/2 pound dried apricots	2 eggs
1-1/2 cups sifted soft-wheat flour	2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 cup butter or other fat	1/4 teaspoon salt, and
1/2 cup sugar	1/2 cup milk.

Once more. (REPEAT):

Wash the apricots, chop fine, and mix with 2 tablespoons of the flour. Sift the remaining flour with the baking powder and salt. Cream the fat, add the sugar, and well-beaten eggs, and add alternately with the milk to the sifted dry ingredients. Stir in the apricots. Pour into a greased mold, cover, and steam for 2 hours. Serve hot with hard sauce.

Beef loaf is made with chopped beef from some inexpensive lean cut like the round or the rump. To the meat, bread crumbs are added and plenty of seasoning.

Eleven ingredients. I'll list them very slowly:

2 pounds lean beef	1 cup chopped parsley
1 cup diced salt pork	1/4 cup chopped onion
4 tablespoons flour	1 cup fine, dry bread crumbs
1-1/2 cups milk	2 teaspoons salt
1 cup chopped celery	1/8 teaspoon pepper, and
4 or 5 dashes tabasco sauce.	

I'll repeat that list of eleven. (REPEAT):

Put the meat through a grinder. Fry the diced salt pork until light brown and crisp and remove the pieces from the pan. Make a sauce of the flour, milk, and 3 tablespoons of the pork drippings. Cook the celery, parsley, and onion for a few minutes in the rest of the pork drippings, and add to this the bread crumbs and seasonings. Combine all the ingredients and use the hands to mix thoroughly. The mixture will have a sticky consistency. Lay a piece of parchment paper on a rack in an open roasting pan. Mold the meat loaf on the paper with the hands. Bake it in a moderate oven (350 degrees Fahrenheit) for 1 and 1/4 hours. Do not cover the pan and do not add water.

Much better results are obtained by making the meat loaf in this way than by packing it into a deep pan and baking it like a loaf of bread. When done, remove it from the paper and serve hot. Or if you prefer, cut it in thin slices when it is cold and serve them on a platter with watercress garnish.

Tomorrow: "Outwitting the Clothes Moth."

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